

# FOOT PRINTS

YORK  
COUNTY  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

A  
HISTORY

VR  
371  
Mor

Appreciation, for the completion of the story to this point,  
is extended to this list of living and deceased historians of York  
County and to others for their interest, contributions and suggestions.

Mr. J. A. Allen of Lackey

✓ Mrs. Laura Barbour of Seaford

Mr. E. S. Bingley of Williamsburg

Mrs. Alleyne Gwynn Burcher of Grafton D

Mrs. Mary Byrd of Darby Road

Mrs. Vernice Camm of Dare

Mrs. Freda Randall Edney of Hornsbyville

✓ Mrs. Virginia Hamm of Seaford

Mrs. Carolyn Hammond of Lackey

Mrs. Thelma Hansford of Seaford

✓ Mrs. Dexter Haven of Yorktown

Mrs. Jennie Sue Hopson of Calthrope's Neck

✓ Mrs. Martha Howard of Bethel Road

Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger of Seaford

✓ Mrs. Thelma Lawson of Yorktown

Mr. Ezekiel Lee of Williamsburg D

✓ Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Orange of Penniman Road

✓ Mr. Glenn Page of Yorktown

Mrs. Sara Randall of Penniman Road

Mr. Robert Sedgwick of Dare

Mrs. Roger Smith of Tabb

Mrs. Musetta White of Grafton D

✓ Mrs. HAZEL PRESSON

✓ Mrs. Margaret Cornick Wornom of Yorktown

Mr. D. S. Bruno of York County Public Schools

Dr. F. S. Kingdon of Old Dominion University

Mr. Ernest Mooney of York County Public Schools

Mr. E. L. Morris, Sr. of Portsmouth

Dr. William G. Cunningham of Old Dominion University



Cary's Chapel School



Fish Neck School



Magruder High School



Seaford School

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## FOREWARD

In weaving a tapestry of public school history for York County, one would expect to find a nice neat history already written. But, such is not the case. However, one has only to spend a short time in any part of the county to realize that the history is recorded, not so much in books and records, but in the minds of people who lived it and are able to share it with interested persons. One has only to make a few phone calls, visit a few homes and before your eyes the missing parts of the living history of this county begins to take form and fit together so that young and old can begin to see a picture that, in its entirety, has not been seen before by many living persons.

Footprints is only the beginning of the picture. Many persons have not been interviewed, and many pictures of old buildings and student groups are still lying in storage waiting to tell their part of this amazing story.

Take some time and walk in the footprints of those who were a part of the story of public schools in York County, and add to your understanding of this place, where American freedom began . . .

E. L. Morris, Jr.

1983

*Enjoy  
your history.  
Ed Morris*

## INTRODUCTION

A historical study often is a work of revelation, bringing to light information and facts that may have had some bearing on events and decisions that in the present time have been taken for granted. Such is this study about the unique character of York County; its past, present and future.

If we determine that York County is a unique place and has been for many years, then we must examine the record to verify our findings as to its uniqueness and how it has maintained this unusual distinction.

For our consideration as to unique events, this list represents some key points:

- . a colony of the London Company
- . a public school in 1711
- . the American Revolution surrender at Yorktown
- . a Quaker community at Skimino
- . a historical community center limited in size due to its historical significance
- . a water-locked community dependent upon steamboat service
- . an outstanding black community school program beginning in 1914
- . no white high school for 24 years
- . a broken father-son employment tradition
- . the planned city of Penniman that did not make
- . the planned DuPont high explosive plant that did not make
- . the private Yacht-Golf Club at Yorktown that did not make
- . the Cement Plant on the river that did not make
- . a county where over 40% of itself is owned by someone else
- . one of the highest impact-aid areas in the nation
- . the top salary in the state paid to teachers
- . the second community in the state to join the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools
- . one of the lowest school drop-out rates in the state
- . first school FM radio station in the state

- . one of the largest military refrigeration storage facilities
- . a rather secret military base
- . an immigrant citizen selected to launch a U.S. Navy ship

If uniqueness has been established, let us now examine further evidence as we continue our search for the ingredient that has made it happen.

Selection of the official school records became the base of this study. (Note - The schools of York County are the feature of this work. Some Poquoson school figures will be included until the year of independence). However, when it was discovered that the records only included the years from 1924 to the present, other information was sought by interviewing citizens who had lived and attended schools in the county prior to 1924 and even prior to 1900. In addition, newspapers and historical documents were used to piece together history prior to 1924. By using this combination of information we were able to discover lost or unknown information that has allowed us to fill in gaps and explain things that occurred then that have bearing on things of today.

This study will provide a sequenced presentation of school and community events by major periods of time, a three generation display of the public schools that were and are in the county to the present time, an appendix chart of information for each school year from 1920, an appendix of available photographs of school buildings and student groups, and an appendix of newspaper articles important to this presentation.

## PROLOGUE

Tidewater Virginia is a network of streams and creeks that flow into larger bodies of water over which floated a system of daily steamboats that maintained the only system of transportation and perhaps communication for the many small communities nestled on each of the creeks and rivers. York County was one such community until the beginning of World War II. Thereafter improved road conditions replacing horse drawn wagons, improved electrical service which replaced kerosene lighting, improved telephone service which replaced the one phone in a community at the local all-purpose store brought about changes that would eventually see the county change from rural to urban.

The life of York County seems to have been related to national events such as the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I and World War II. Each of these events has brought about change in the county in the areas of transportation, electrification, communication, occupation, housing and education. Of the time periods noted, our attention in this presentation will cover the period from the early 1900's to the present.

Suburban living came to the county in the 1950 - 1970 period when as many as 1,000 new students came in a one year period about 1967. Wood land and farm lands were changed in a few years to the new living style of a semi-forested lot.

Lumber camps began to disappear after the war years as did farming and a definite slow down in the seafood industry occurred as better money was available in the city, at the Naval Weapons Station, at NASA or in the shipyard. The circle of father son employment was broken.

Even into the late sixties the old county store a former citadel of each rural pocket community maintained the supply center concept for the new suburbanites even as it had for former generations having the only telephone, electricity and post office at the convenient crossroads or steamboat dock.

Of particular note was the fact for a twenty-five year period from 1929 until the opening of York High in 1954 the white students of the county did not have a high school program for graduation. Instead they had to pay tuition and in some cases room and board as they went to either Morrison High or Warwick as it was later known in Newport News, Mathew Whaley in Williamsburg or to Poquoson to gain a high school diploma.

A name of mystery abounds in the county for which few people know the answer. The name is that of Penniman. Penniman City was to have been a total community, fully planned on paper to house the work force for the DuPont high explosive plant which was to have been built on the site of Cheatam Annex. Instead the company built plant #37 in Hopewell and York County accepted the Russell Penniman name, in honor of a man who was a chemist for the company. ( see attached letters - housing plan )

Another industry that did not materialize in the county was a cement plant to have been located on the present Amoco Refinery property. The sinking of the Titanic took the life of the sponsor.

Yet another note of intrigue surrounds the battlefield at Yorktown. If you walk over some of the expanse, you will note that it has the feel of a golf course, and you will be right, for it was a golf course. We are told that a yacht club was to have been built at Yorktown to go with the golf course and together they would form a recreational space for some very influential Americans.

The road to Hampton and Newport News now known as Route 17 has been everything from the stage coach road which you can see best from aerial photographs as it winds its way from the Surrender Field around the Edgehill community toward old Warwick Courthouse to an ancient crossing of Harwood Mill which could be seen when the lake was dry for recent repairs to the dam to the old York-Hampton Road still in use in part to Harpersville Road still in use in part to Route 234 still in use to the present road which has only been a four lane highway for a few years.

Names, for instance, have changed so that several names might apply to the same place. Consider that Seaford was known as Calamar until 1900 when a steamboat had on board a sign for Seaford, Delaware. The name was liked and the change took place. Grafton at one time was known as Bigler's Mills or Cockletown, Queen's Lake was known as The Glebe or Semples Farm, while Dare was known as Fish Neck and Seaford was known as Crab Neck.

In 1920 the school budget of \$52,019 covered 43 teachers, 1,031 students, 20 frame school buildings, no lunch program, no transportation and a capital outlay of \$2,447.

In 1978 the budget of \$17,372,291 covered 513 teachers, 10,174 students, 15 brick school buildings, 15 cafeterias, 103 school buses and a capital outlay of \$1,512,941.

Public school trends and the financing of those trends in York County during the 58 year period between 1920 and 1978 has seen new partners come into the funding family and others leave.

During 1924 and again for the 8 years between 1943 and 1951, the state provided more funding than the local contribution in the annual school budget. Federal funds came into the partnership in 1953 while district funds disappeared after 1964. The guaranteed levy came into being in 1965 and terminated in 1976 when the general apportionment replaced it. As a result, reserve funds disappeared as well as the financial cushion enjoyed for so many years.

The events and conditions mentioned in this summary will serve to inform the reader that York County has had its share of normal changes and events and perhaps a few rather unusual happenings

E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS & COMPANY

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

HIGH EXPLOSIVES OPERATING DEPARTMENT

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

May 5th, 1916

Mr. H. W. Bartsdale,



We are confronted with the problem of selecting names for factory No. 36 in Montana and No. 37 in Virginia. So far none have been suggested that seem appropriate and feasible to adopt. Mr. Haskell seemed to be inclined to name one of them for G. R. Jackson but we find that there are postoffices and towns by this name both in Virginia and Montana. Can you help us with any suggestion in the category of names of men, brands or business names or any that would be appropriate from a historical or local basis for these two plants?

*W. J. Haskell*  
ACTING DIRECTOR



COPY

FORWARDED  
MAY 14 1918  
Buckley  
WCS

May 12th, 1918

70

My dear Mr. Penniman:-

It gives me great pleasure to advise that a new High-Explosives plant now in course of construction for this Department on the York River about six miles from Williamsburg, Virginia, has this day been named PENNIMAN in honor of your father, Russell S. Penniman.

His name has been selected not only in recognition of his services to the Explosives Companies with which he was so long and actively associated, but also as a fitting tribute to the important part he played in the development and improvement of the art of manufacturing high explosives.

His individual accomplishments in connection with the development of the process of waste acid recovery, manufacture and use of nitrate of ammonia, and other distinct and individual acquisitions to the industry entitle his name to a permanent place in the annals of the art, a result which will, we feel, in some measure be attained by identifying him permanently with the operations of this Department at our Penniman Works.

With kind regards, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

W. C. SPRUANCE, Jr.

ACTING DIRECTOR,  
HIGH EXPLOSIVES OPERATING DEPT.

Russell S. Penniman, Jr., Esq.,

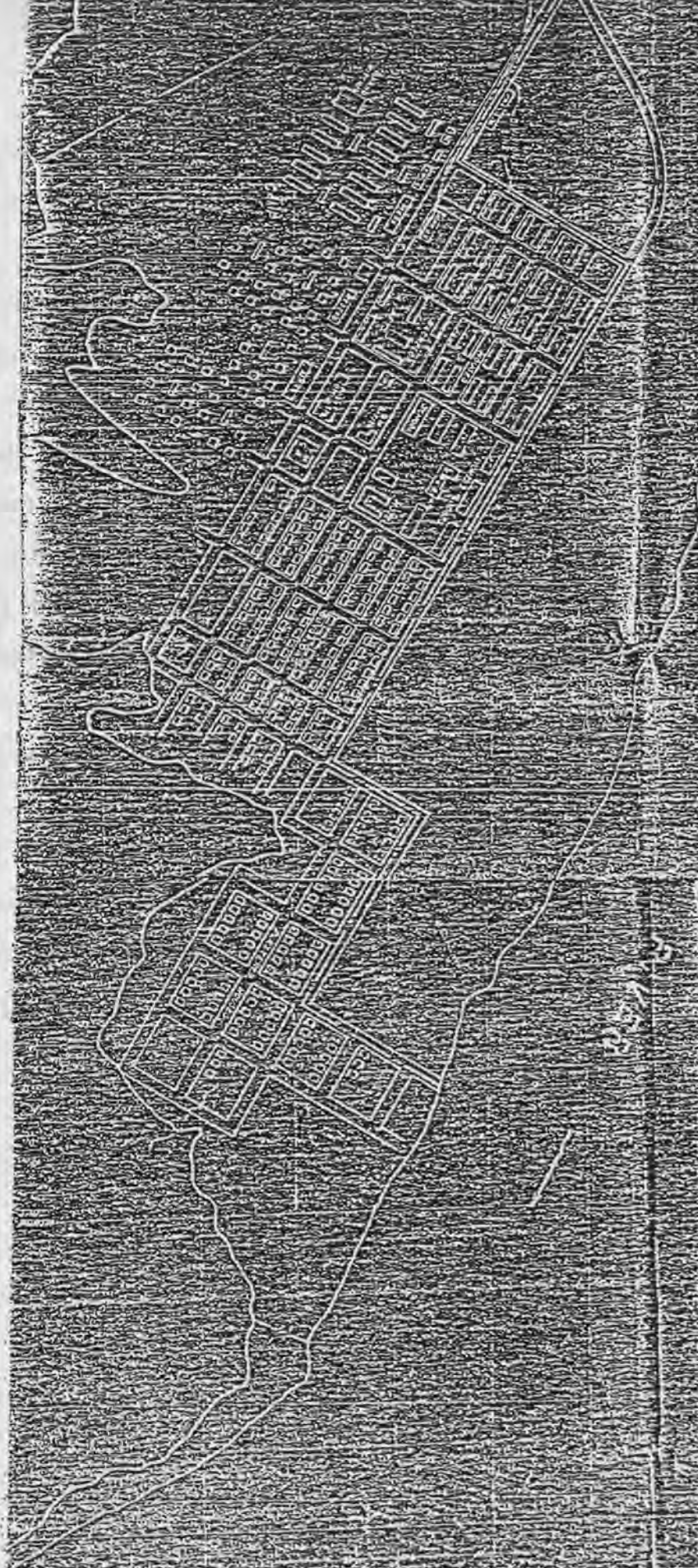
West Berkeley, Cal.

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DuPont Plant #37 named for  
Russell Penniman  
High Explosives

Plan for Penniman City

Hospital  
School  
Hotel  
YWCA  
YMCA  
Plastered Houses  
Bungalows  
Family Houses  
Bachelor Apartments  
Post Office  
Restaurant  
Police Station



## THE EARLY YEARS

1711 - 1923

Prior to 1870 when public education began in Virginia records reveal that there was already a person concerned about the public education of children in York County.

In 1711, William Stark gave a quarter of an acre of land for a school by the following deed: "To all Christian people to whom these presents shall come send greetings. Know ye that I the said William Stark being of good and perfect mind and without fraud and deciet for divers good causes and considerations me here unto moving have given granted, confirmed, and by these presents do give, grant, and confirm unto my loving friends whose names are under writ to them and their heirs forever.

I, William Stark, of the Parish of York-Hampton and the county of York in Virginia have given and granted --- unto said gentlemen who have been at the charges of building a scoulehouse. I dew (sic) give a Quarter of an acre of land for the proper yuse (sic) of a scule forever and for no other yuse but for a public scule to educate children now lying in York-Hampton Parish in York County the quarter of an acre being land about the house and joyning Mr. William Hansford's land at the head of Newman's Spring the names of those that have been benefactors towards the Scule house as followeth: Mr. Will Hewitt, Mr. Thomas Hansford, Mr. Thomas Barbar, Mr. Joseph Walker, Mr. Will Barbar, Mr. Lewis Burwell, Mr. Cole Digges, Mr. William Harwood, Mr. Thomas Harwood, Mr. Robert Goodwin, Mr. Cuthbert Eubert, Mr. Thomas Wade,

Mr. Richard Pate, Mr. Richard Burt, Mr. William Stark.

In witness thereof, I have unto sett my hand and seal this Eateenth day of June in the year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady Anne, by the Grace of God Queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland and Defender of the Faith and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eleven." <sup>1</sup>

As a colony of the great English Metropolis (London Company) York County in the 17th century had doubtless more of culture than was to be found in other neighboring English colonies. Records indicate very little in the way of education for the masses in other colonies. However, nearly every inventory enumerates books, and the wills have frequent provisions regarding education. There were many teachers and tutors, and the county courts looked after the poor children and saw that they were taught to read and write by binding them out to useful trades with this requirement in the indentures.

Historical records tell us that people in the export/import businesses and government began to settle in the Yorktown village area while other concentrations of people began to locate at the crossroads of the Yorktown - Hampton stagecoach road and on the prime waterways that had sail freighters to move seafood, lumber and agriculture products into the Hampton Roads cities and up the Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore.

In 1774 at a location known as Burke's Corner, the Quakers of Upper York County erected a meeting house. The general area of the Quaker settlement, now known as Skinino, was on the road from

Six Mile Ordinary to the Capahosick Ferry Landing, which provided service across the York River to Gloucester County. The settlement never reached its planned potential and was abandoned as the group moved on to Ohio.

As the century began to end, the war clouds began to gather and the world focus centered on a place called Yorktown.

On October 19, 1791 the drama of the last battle of the American Revolution and the following surrender had just been completed.

Citizens, or as they would soon be known, had not fully realized that they were no longer colonists of the mother country, but were free Americans. Now the foundation of a free society could be built in this place - Yorktown.

It would be some time, almost another 100 years, before free public education would be a reality in York County. During the interval, much ground work would be laid in the new world as men began to experiment with a treasured and new found ingredient of a democracy - freedom. A closer look at York County during the 1790 - 1870 period would reveal a variety of educational plans for children of the new nation.

Some were educated by educated relatives, some by a local minister, others by a visiting tutor, others by a hired tutor meeting in a small building convenient for several families and others were sent back to England to attend a variety of available schools.

But times began to change after the surrender and the memories and direction of the mother country became a faded memory as the young nation began to set a course to provide a free educational system for its own people.

Records are very few to cover the years between 1791 and 1870 as most were burned or destroyed in some way during the Civil War conflict. As a result, very few records are available about education. Records do tell us that a log school house was erected in Seaford in 1885 and that a two room school replaced the log school. The log school may have been the first public school built in the county. School teachers, greatly handicapped by today's standards, made progress with very few books, even fewer conveniences and conditions that many today would find hard to believe. But public schools opened and children attended and the changes that have occurred since the beginning could only have happened in America. <sup>2</sup>

The earliest York County Public School records available are from the year 1924-25. The records indicate that 15 schools were being operated in the county during that time. Five of the schools with 16 classrooms served the white students while 10 of the schools with 25 classrooms served the black students. Three of the schools of that period still stand with 2 being used as homes, while one lies unused and dying.

Since there was no school bus to catch in 1924-25, getting to school was an adventure in itself. Most students had to walk long distances, crossing creeks on logs, or in rowboats, walking through woods on wagon trails, passing the sawmill, the seafood dock, the boat yard and the steamboat dock. The community was heavily involved, in an indirect way, with the learning of the students during the 1924-25 period and for many years to follow.

Snow conditions meant special preparation for getting to school when children might have to walk several miles through the woods to their school. Many would wrap their feet with burlap strips that would be removed at school and put on for the return trip. Along the way, an ingenious method was used to communicate to other friends if a certain intersection in the woods had been passed by the other student or group. At the cross path or intersection, the first arriving group would shake snow from branches to let the second or trailing group know that one group was ahead of the other. This would promote a race to catch up with friends for the walk to school in the snow. 3

## Footnotes

1. \_\_\_\_\_, Virginia Magazine of History, Vol. 33, pg. 28.

2. Interview

3. Interview

## CLASSICAL PERIOD

1924 - 1929

Farming, seafood and lumbering provided the means of a living for most residents of the county, and daily steamboat service to Norfolk and Baltimore, provided contact with the outside world and the way to move and receive goods and people. The arrival of the boat each day was a big event and much business was conducted around the dock and the local all-everything store.

Historical school records indicate the 1924-25 period to have been a classical period as the study of Latin moved through five schools in a four year period in a doming fashion from Dare-Grafton in 1924, to Magruder in 1925, to Yorktown and Seaford in 1928, and to York County Training School in 1928, but not as Latin, but, instead, French.

During this time, several courses, in addition to Latin or French, made the rounds to different schools. They were Sanitation, Dictionary and Local History. York County Training School went the distance by teaching such courses as Agriculture, Rhetoric, Chemistry and Commercial Arithmetic.

The curriculum for the period was maintained by state supplied courses of study and the abilities of the individual teacher. Records will indicate there appeared to be no control for like grades to teach the same subjects. Instead, the records indicate different instructional plans within the school.

The stability of the 180 day school session was not to be established during this period and the session varied from 180 days for the white students to 160 days for the black high school students to 140 days for the black elementary students.

First grade students attended school all day, but only attended classes for a half day session. Since no transportation was available, students had to remain at school all day. Teachers taught half of the first grade students while the other half of the class played outside, without any supervision, except for an occasional glance through the window. On rainy days, a crayon, a piece of drawing paper and the floor of the auditorium or the classroom, with the other students in it, provided the scene for taking care of 74, 67, 55, 41, 38 or less children.

The ages of a typical multi-aged, multi-graded class, for example, would be 6 to 7 years difference or ages 11 through 17 in one room. One teacher had to provide all instruction for the students in the room.



The accompanying chart will show the number of students in each school and the students and grades assigned each teacher. One might keep in mind the teacher/pupil ratio as indicated for black and white schools as indicated on each chart. Attendance figures on the charts show all kinds of groupings with the larger numbers in the early elementary grades and fewer and fewer students in the upper grades. Many high school subjects were taught to 6 or less students. We are told that the large multi-age rooms were like a big family with the older students teaching many of the younger.

year 1924-25

Ele. Subs. Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic  
Grammar, Geography, Va. History, PE  
Drawing, Morals  
Sec. Subs The above plus Latin, Biology, Dictionary  
Chemistry, French and Algebra.

Form T, No. 2-354.

1924-25

NOTE—Under subjects below write fraction in proper space after each name, the numerator to show grade pupil is in for the current session, and the denominator the grade to which promoted.

10

At the beginning of the period, 1031 students were enrolled with 980 students enrolled at the end of the period. The budget of \$52,000 in 1920 was surpassed by the budget of \$66,000 in 1930. Per pupil costs were \$27 in 1920 and \$38 in 1930. Funding came from three sources which included state, local district and county.

School bus transportation would not get to the county until about 1945, and the good old rainy day session when you had no recess and would dismiss an hour early would still be a favorite until about 1948.

In 1922 the red brick part of the new Yorktown School would come into use replacing the old two room frame school located in the parking lot area in front of the jail of the present court house, and also become one of the buildings in our memory span of the schools of long ago.



## DEPRESSION AND RECONSTRUCTION

1930 - 1936

A low enrollment figure was established in 1931, which continued until a recovery figure was established in 1936.

The white high school program beyond the ninth grade was gone from the county and would not return to the county until 1954, when York High School was opened; a period of 24 years.

In the interim, white high school students had a unique experience attempting to gain a diploma. High School students at the upper end of the county attended the Mathew Whaley High School in Williamsburg, while students in the lower end of the county attended Morrison High, or, beginning in 1932, the new Poquoson High School. A school bus was available for the long ride to Morrison, and it was a long ride, but many of the students roomed and boarded in Hilton Village for the week and came home on the week-end in order to attend Morrison High School (Warwick High School).

Five schools still provided services for the white students, through the ninth grade. Black schools decreased from ten to eight, as the schools at Seaford and Lightfoot were closed, and the Fish Neck School, located in front of the present Dare School, became the Grafton School.

During some of the lean years, when money was very scarce, the teachers who were paying room and board were taken into local homes at no charge so the school board could pay a reduced salary and keep the schools open. This might mean the difference between a seven month

session or a nine month session.

In the classroom, Latin still remained a popular course being offered in two schools, with Dictionary moving to a new school. York County Training School still had that little extra as they added Plane and Solid Geometry in 1929, Civil Government and Business Arithmetic in 1931 and Phonics in 1932. Through this period, the training school seemed to have a forward look in the types of courses offered.

1933 seemed to be a back-to-basics as very few frills existed, and all schools operated for only 160 days. 1934 was to be a 180 days session for all schools and 1935 was to be a 160 day session. Finally in 1936, the die was cast for the 180 day session as the state made the decision for uniformity.

# York County Public Schools

year 1930-31

| white     | GRADES |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    |      | black     | GRADES |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |      |     |
|-----------|--------|----|---|---|----|----|---|----|---|----|----|------|-----------|--------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|------|-----|
|           | 1      | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5  | 6  | 7 | 8  | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12   |           | 1      | 2  | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6  | 7 | 8  | 9 | 10 | 11   | 12  |
| Magruder  |        | 16 |   |   | 17 |    |   |    |   |    |    | 33   | Oak Grove |        | 50 |   | 34 |   |    |   |    |   |    |      | 175 |
| Yorktown  |        | 12 |   |   | 11 |    |   | 11 |   |    |    | 64   | Strifield |        | 47 |   | 13 |   |    |   |    |   |    |      | 60  |
| Good Neck |        | 29 |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    | 29   | YCTS      |        | 38 |   | 42 |   | 34 |   | 14 |   |    | 235  |     |
| Seaford   |        | 42 |   |   | 19 | 21 |   | 19 |   |    |    | 108  | Tampico   |        | 35 |   | 13 |   |    |   |    |   |    | 40   |     |
| Dare-Graf |        | 12 |   |   | 20 |    |   |    |   |    |    | 77   | Grafton   |        | 27 |   | 12 |   |    |   |    |   |    | 34   |     |
| No High S |        |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    | 22.2 | Darbyto   |        | 39 |   | 14 |   |    |   |    |   |    | 53   |     |
|           |        |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    | 311  | C. Chapel |        | 14 |   | 16 |   |    |   |    |   |    | 64   |     |
|           |        |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    |      | Bethel    |        | 33 |   | 9  |   |    |   |    |   |    | 142  |     |
|           |        |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    |      |           |        |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |    | 39.2 |     |
|           |        |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |    |      |           |        |    |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |    | 106  |     |

Ele. Subs. Reading, Spelling, Writing, English  
Mathematics, Community Study, Health  
PE.

Sec. Subs The above plus History, Civics  
Geography, Latin and French

York County Training School was to add, in 1934, a course on Negro History, and Industrial Arts in 1935, and swing back to Agriculture in 1936, which had drifted away after 1929.



The white schools were to add Vocational Guidance in 1931, Music and Physiology in 1933 and Unit Activities in 1935.

The 180 day session was still to fluctuate for a few more years until 1936 when all schools in the county would begin to operate for 180 days.

1937 would bring a new format in the term report and teachers would no longer have to report the cost of room and board.

The CCC Camp, located on Cook Road or old route 17 near the battlefield, would prove to be a well known place as its members worked in planting trees and developing the battlefield, and the York-Warwick County Schools were to merge as one unit for the years 1932-35.

## BACK TO BASICS

1937 - 1940

York County Training School, the only high school in the county for the 1930-1954 period continued to provide a course in Agriculture and Chemistry in 1937 and had courses in General Science, Geography, Civics, Home Economics and Biology in 1938.

Health, Music and Unit Work were added in a few schools in 1939. In all, the years were somewhat quiet as the area recovered from the depression and the anticipation began to shift toward the war years.

The term report from the State Department of Education was changed in 1937 and now the curriculum guides provided would only call for Social Studies, Language Arts and Mathematics to be marked on the annual report with eight write-in blanks for other subjects taught. Many teachers only marked the three grades required on their reports as was evidenced on the official records. A new feature of the report required grades for student Initiative, Team-Work and Self-Control. This new format design for the term report would remain in use through the early sixties.

Through the thirties the school membership would be on a steady uphill climb to reach a peak in 1936 and begin a slow decline and an abrupt drop during the 1941-45 war years and then begin a steady climb up the hill to the present time.

A comparison of the 1934-35 and 1940-41 charts will show the

York County Public Schools

|            |    |
|------------|----|
| * promoted | 41 |
| failed     | 20 |
| dropped    | 15 |

York County Public Schools

\* 33 girls  
6 boys

16

A typical 4th or 5th year classroom of the period had students enrolled from 8 to 14 years of age or an age span of 6 to 7 years.

York County for this period would continue to be a rural area with the clatter of horse-drawn wagons and the rattle of trucks bumping over the narrow roads with loads of seafood, lumber and farm products for either the daily steamboat or on the long run to Hampton or Newport News.



## WORLD WAR II

1941 - 1945

The war years would see many changes occur within the county and the county school system. The Navy Mine Station and the Mine Warfare School were in everyone's conversation with military men and their families all over the county. Housing would be anything with four walls and a roof. Narrow Route 17 (two lanes) would become a very busy roadway north and south for local and national travel. The ferry boats crossing the river to Gloucester Point would do a booming business, and the last of the steam boat service to Norfolk and Baltimore would cease with one of the boats to later become the famous "Exodus" vessel of Haifa Harbor, Israel fame. Seafood, lumbering and farming would continue as the mainstay of county employment, but would begin to compete with civil service employment on one of the many military bases in the county or the area, and gradually fade as the county began the move from rural to urban.

County schools would be reduced from eleven buildings to eight or 4 schools for the black students and 4 for the white. Yorktown Elementary would be the only school to show a sizable gain in students and that gain would only be about 80 students. But in those days, a gain of 80 students was a big thing and took an expansion of the building to house the increase.

In the classroom, new program formats called for Individual, Unit, and Social Activities, while Art, Music and Health began to appear as subjects in all the schools, and a stress began to be placed on oral/

silent reading and oral/silent language. It seemed to be the beginning of consistency in school programs for all of the 8 schools in the county. Health instruction became very important and it was highly desirable to be a five pointer, and get a gold star for good eyes, ears, nose, throat and teeth.

Class groupings took on a new look in a few places as, for the very first time a few teachers had a single grade level class and the Dare-Grafton School had an unusual pairing of classes. (1940 - 41 chart)

# York County Public Schools

year 1944-45

| white       | GRADES              |    |    |           |    |           |    |   |   |    |    |    | black | GRADES              |    |           |   |           |           |   |    |           |    |           |     |      |
|-------------|---------------------|----|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|---|---|----|----|----|-------|---------------------|----|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|---|----|-----------|----|-----------|-----|------|
|             | 1                   | 2  | 3  | 4         | 5  | 6         | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |       | 1                   | 2  | 3         | 4 | 5         | 6         | 7 | 8  | 9         | 10 | 11        | 12  |      |
| ③ Magruder  | <u>38</u>           |    |    | <u>37</u> |    | <u>32</u> |    |   |   |    |    |    | 97    | YCTS ⑦              | 51 | <u>44</u> |   | <u>41</u> | <u>44</u> |   | 38 | <u>46</u> |    | <u>16</u> | 303 |      |
| ① Yorktown  | 35                  | 36 | 30 | 37        | 33 | 31        | 21 |   |   |    |    |    | 223   | Grafton ①           |    | <u>49</u> |   |           |           |   |    |           |    |           | 49  |      |
| ③ Seaford   | <u>26</u>           |    |    | <u>26</u> |    | <u>13</u> |    |   |   |    |    |    | 65    | Tabb ③              |    | <u>37</u> |   | <u>29</u> |           |   |    |           |    |           | 66  |      |
| ③ Dare-Graf | <u>23</u>           |    |    | <u>16</u> |    | <u>31</u> |    |   |   |    |    |    | 70    | C. Chapel ①         |    | <u>39</u> |   |           |           |   |    |           |    |           | 39  |      |
| ①           |                     |    |    |           |    |           |    |   |   |    |    |    | ④ 55  |                     |    |           |   |           |           |   |    |           |    |           |     | ④ 57 |
|             | pupil/teacher ratio |    |    |           |    |           |    |   |   |    |    |    | 28.4  | pupil/teacher ratio |    |           |   |           |           |   |    |           |    |           |     | 41.5 |

Big activities of the period were collecting newspaper, bringing paper bags filled with flattened tin cans and toothpaste tubes to the school for the scrap metal drive, having a Victory Garden at home and at school, practicing for air raids, buying the weekly "War Bond Stamps" and Bonds, learning to identify airplanes, getting by with three gallons of gas a week on the "A" sticker, and learning to get along without any kind of chewing gum for a 5 year period and lots of other things.

This period was to be the first step of rapid growth and funding increases as the overall budget for the period increased over 400%.

## POST WAR

1945 - 1954

For the 1945-50 period, the county attempted to recover from the war years. Left over businesses that had come to the county during the war years decided to stay, as well as some of the people. Tourism began to grow as crowds visited the battlefield and the beach. Farming and lumbering struggled but never did recover to enjoy the prosperity of the seafood industry. Civil service employment had won the war, economically.

The American Oil Company built a refinery and the Virginia Electric and Power Company built an electric generating station next to each other on the river front and all of a sudden the county treasury had more money than it knew what to do with.

For the schools, it was an assessment time as various schools were shut down and combined with others. School busing came into being to accomodate the combined schools. The number of schools diminished from 8 to 5 and for the first time, the white student count exceeded the black student count. White teachers began to experience the large class sizes the black teachers had known for so long.

In the classroom, students were graded on ten or more subject areas plus initiative, team-work and self-control. Less and less multi-grading was in evidence as more and more single grade grouping came into being.

The press of students was going to cause a concern for new schools and so it was in 1952, the new Magruder and Grafton-Bethel opened followed in 1954 by James Weldon Johnson, Frederick Douglas and York High School.

# York County Public Schools

year 1950-51

|                                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| * 16 boys 30 boys<br>38 girls 23 girls |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| white                                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | black                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRADES                                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | GRADES                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Macruder <sup>+</sup>                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | YCTS <sup>(5)</sup>        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Yorktown                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Grafton                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tabb <sup>(2)</sup>                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| (15)                                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | (11)                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pupil/teacher ratio (4.5)*             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | pupil/teacher ratio (4.6)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

change over

# York County Public Schools

year 1955-56

| white      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | black  |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| GRADES     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | GRADES |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
|            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |        |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Magruder   | 40 | 44 | 43 | 52 | 31 | 32 |    |    |    |    |    |    | 375    | P. Douglas | 34 | 34 | 30 | 38 | 29 | 33 |    |    |    |    | 245 |
| Yorktown   | 55 | 47 | 42 | 36 | 31 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 426    | JW Johnson | 34 | 34 | 33 | 36 | 35 | 33 | 37 | 33 | 29 | 34 | 694 |
| YHS YHS    |    |    |    |    | 34 | 42 | 44 | 34 | 31 | 33 | 33 | 22 | 686    |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Graft-Beth | 47 | 46 | 44 | 46 | 31 | 42 |    |    |    |    |    |    | 504    |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 959 |
|            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1991   |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |

Five new schools opened their doors replacing older buildings during the 1952-54 period while farm lands and forests retreated in the wave of new housing. Several elementary schools during this time earned the nickname of "trailer village" due to the large number of units located around the building providing classroom space.

Federal funding made its debut into county school funding in 1953 and none too soon as the budget for the second time would increase more than 400% and the total figure would enter into the million dollar category for the first time. And in just a few years and for several years the highest salary paid to a teacher in the state of Virginia would be in York County.

The push to suburbia had begun, and the rainy day session of early dismissal had been put away quietly.

## ROAD TO SUBURBIA

1955 - 1970

Not at the snap of a finger, but over almost a two decade period, the county would change from a rural area to an urban community. When it started, it seemed as if it would not stop. Before your eyes, an avalanche of over 5,000 pupils descended upon the York County schools during a fifteen year period.

Many families were moving out of the cities, but many came from other states. Some were returning to the county having been stationed here in military service.

Farm lands and forests steadily retreated as more homes were built and roads were cut through remote areas to develop more building sites.

It became important to quickly provide housing for the many students now living in the county. Five new schools opened their doors during the 1952-54 period, and the tired old York County Training School went up in flames, and with it, many valuable records.

In the schools, the curriculum was rather basic. Very few frills existed as the main thrust was to provide adequate housing for the new mass of pupils. The elementary program pretty well followed the state courses of instruction and many workbooks were in use.

The secondary schools reflected the influence of "Sputnik" with a heavy math and science program. You will note that neither high school, James Weldon Johnson or York High, had much in the areas of Industrial Arts, Day Trades or Agriculture. Make note that the twelfth grade, which had not been in the state of Virginia, finally came into being during

York County Public Schools

| white    |                   | GRADES         |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    | black |                      | GRADES |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|-------|----------------------|--------|---|---|---|-----------------|---|----|---|----|----|----|------|---------|
|          |                   | 1              | 2              | 3              | 4              | 5              | 6        | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12 |       |                      | 1      | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5               | 6 | 7  | 8 | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12   |         |
| Marruder | 30<br>11 34<br>18 | 31<br>27<br>12 | 35<br>34<br>13 | 33<br>34<br>24 | 31<br>27<br>24 | 34<br>32<br>33 | 32<br>31 |   |   |   |     |    |    | 747   | F Douglas            |        |   |   |   | records missing |   |    |   |    |    |    | 260  |         |
| orktown  | 34<br>26          | 33<br>26       | 32<br>26       | 28<br>30       | 31<br>31       | 31             |          |   |   |   |     |    |    | 33    | JW John              | 3      | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4               | 3 | 34 | 3 | 2  | 3  | 3  | 2    | 90<br>2 |
| VHS      |                   |                |                | sections       |                |                | 11       | 8 | 5 | 5 | 690 | 4  |    |       | (represent patients) |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
| Graf     | 24<br>39          | 31<br>31       | 34<br>31       | 35<br>34       | 36<br>37       | 37<br>34       | 37<br>34 |   |   |   |     |    |    | 899   |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    | 1162 |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   |    |    |    |      |         |
|          |                   |                |                |                |                |                |          |   |   |   |     |    |    |       |                      |        |   |   |   |                 |   |    |   | </ |    |    |      |         |

Six new buildings were added to the system and a former U.S. Air Force elementary school was "adopted" into the system, giving the system eleven new plants and one used plant.



School secretaries became twelve month employees allowing schools to be open year round. Reading teachers were employed for almost all schools. Aides were hired for all schools. A psychologist came into our midst and 2 others followed in a few years. Elementary music teachers came on the scene as did art and physical education teachers for grades 1-6. The Self-Study of the Southern Association announced our membership in the organization as the second system in the state of Virginia. Not to forget, but integration of our schools began to allow us to regroup and combine many efforts as of 1964. Of course we should not forget the entrance of the "honey bucket" truck into the organization, because it has been an indispensable member of our school system since about 1965 for those schools whose septic systems would not work properly. The Trainable class for elementary students started at Grafton-Bethel about 1965, in half of the library office with reading in the other half office and other Special Education classes followed at different locations around the county. Dare School was a seventh year school for a short time about 1965 before it became an elementary school. Visiting teachers and assistant principals joined the team as more student needs were being met by hiring additional personnel. The school nurse program was greatly enlarged as more personnel were made available in this area. A new school bus garage, new buses, a transportation director and a maintenance chief to look after these and the many school buildings joined the ranks. The job had grown to such proportions that an assistant superintendent was employed as the student body had grown to almost 9,000, the teachers to almost 400, the school fleet to almost 100 units and the budget to almost seven million.

The curriculum would take many positions as graduated steps would lead the elementary schools from the workbook centered program to the Continuous Progress Program of levels for individual student. Movement report cards would be redesigned several times and parent/teacher conferences would be installed as one of the means of accomplishing student progress for the elementary school. Programs would be designed and redesigned to meet the needs of all pupils, including every phase of the Special Education Spectrum complete with pick-up and delivery bus service.

In the secondary schools, now with the added and new advantage of the intermediate school, grades 7 and 8, all doors began to open and the curriculum expanded to include basic, intermediate and advanced courses in exploratory areas, trade and vocational, academic, visual arts, music, business, diversified and distributive. The semester long course was revamped to become the pentamester course in some subject areas, as the Scope Program of short concentrated studies made its debut.

Course offerings were also expanded to go beyond, such as advanced electronics or radio station engineering and announcing in the school radio station, WYES, which was the first public school radio station in the state, or courses that reached into the college level for credit. Curriculum design, state and local, had attempted to reach every pupil; regardless of his or her individual level of achievement or need.

Of a non-academic note, Cheatom Annex, in 1963, would lose the unusual cow who thought she was a deer, having lived with the herd on the station for 25 years.

# THE PLATEAU

1971 - 1982

This period might be characterized as a time of review, evaluation and redesign.

With the completion and occupancy of Tabb High in 1972, Tabb Elementary and Bruton High in 1976, and Mt. Vernon Elementary in 1982 a high water mark or a plateau had been reached, and for once almost all neighborhood students were housed in schools within their neighborhoods.

## York County Public Schools

year 1970-71

|          | ELEMENTARY |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     | SECONDARY |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
|----------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
|          | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12  | 1         | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12  |
| Miller M |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 470 | Queens L  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 517 |
| Gruder   |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 529 | York I    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 576 |
| nnex     |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 177 | Tabb I    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 020 |
| orktown  |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 753 | York H1   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 541 |
| esford   |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 627 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
| are      |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 724 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 654 |
| 3        |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 672 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
| 4        |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 598 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
|          |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 550 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |

# York County Public Schools

Year 1974-75

|          | ELEMENTARY |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     | SECONDARY |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
|----------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
|          | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12  | 1         | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12  |
| Waller M |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 404 | Q Lake    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 350 |
| Aggruder |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 446 | York I    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 494 |
| Annex    |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 175 | Tabb I    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 705 |
| Yorktown |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 743 | York H1   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 382 |
| Seaford  |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 689 | Tabb H1   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 229 |
| Dare     |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 658 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
| Bethel   |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 629 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 160 |
| Manor    |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 431 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |
|          |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    | 175 |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |     |

Having reached a housing plateau, it was discovered by the census that the student enrollment had also reached a plateau and was beginning to slowly fall away from the peak figure.

Now in 1978, in a 58 year span, the circle has been completed. The division had 15 schools in 1920 and it now has another set of 15 schools in 1978.

The view ahead could be questionable. Now that we have all the schools, staff and programs that we might need, census figures indicate that fewer students will be coming into the primary grades than are graduating from the high schools. Suddenly, we realize that we have caught up in one way, and we may have to close down and let go in another way.

year 1980 - 81

'432

4286

30

to fill empty rooms.

However, now in 1982 the Navy has begun its housing growth program as the expansion of housing at the Naval Weapons Station will open for occupancy in 1983. This could provide students to fill empty classrooms at schools in the upper end of the county.

Will this plateau of time and concern only be a step before another time of growth descends upon the county?

Educational trends and financing might conclude with the question - do trends control financing, or does financing control trends?

## IN CONCLUSION

In reviewing the evidences of the unique aspects of the county, official school records, interviews with people, newspaper articles written and historical information, and in light of the thesis put forth in the beginning of this work, I arrive at the conclusion that the uniqueness of the county belongs to the people who have chosen to live and work here. I stand amazed at the thread of consistency that has been left on the pages of history of York County by the imprint of quality people with a desire to do better.

Will our FOOTPRINTS in fifty years be those of people striving to maintain a unique character...?

## FIRST GENERATION SCHOOLS

Pre-1900

Mill Pond

Springfield

Corner Pine

Grafton

Poor House Farm

Seaford

Smithville

Yorktown

## MILL POND SCHOOL

Pre 1900 - 1921

Before there was a Naval Weapons Station, there were many people who lived in various communities and worked on the land. One such place was around Felgate's Creek near the Great House area. The Mill Pond School was located on the Glebe Land, about four miles up from Felgate's Creek at the thickly populated, four forks in the road known as Charles Corner.

It was a one-room school, with the usual outdoor accommodations, one teacher, and students in grades, or books, 1-6. No high school program existed in York County in those days. Students went to school from October until April, walking as many as five miles in the rain, snow, and mud, and sunshine, occasionally getting a ride in a horse-drawn wagon or on the back of a horse or mule while on the way to or from school. At the end of the school session in 1921, the school was closed and the students attended classes for the next three years in the Black Swamp Church (St. John).

When the U. S. Government purchased the land and the Navy Mine Depot came into being, the names of Mill Pond School and Charles Corner Store, Black Swamp Church, and others, faded from the scene.

As the land changed hands, residents went about the business of relocating their families in other parts of rural York County.<sup>1</sup>

## SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL

Pre 1920 - 1953

The story of Springfield School is really the story of two schools; one for the colored and one for the white, with the same name and a series of very interesting conditions.

At one time, there was a temporary Springfield School for white students located on Penniman Road near Jones Point. The other school of the same name was also located on Penniman Road in the same area, having been built for white students but turned over to the black, or colored, community in 1922. This particular school was built as a one-room school with a second room added.

Reverend Whales was the teacher of the school and was allowed to carry a rifle and a ball and chain to protect himself and his students from adults who lurked in the woods. Students were marched to and from school in ranks of two with students adding on or dropping off at their home. The teacher was widely recognized for his discipline.

In those days in that part of the county, York County provided a teacher but no building. As a result, churches were pressed into service as school houses. Instead of a PTA, there was a league that collected funds and became instrumental in having schools located and built.

In 1914, the DuPont Company was planning to build a nitroglycerin or explosives plant on what is now Cheatam Annex. Penniman Road was built to the plant and the land around the plant was cut into lots by the Old Dominion Company for the anticipation of the development of Penniman City.

When DuPont moved the plant to Hopewell, Penniman City faded into the sunset.

In the 1919 period, when people were moving off the Navy Mine property, before there was a Springfield School, students could pay \$8.00 a year tuition and attend James City County Training School in Williamsburg. The same tuition condition existed for families moving to the south into Elizabeth City County (Hampton).<sup>2</sup>

## CORNER PINE SCHOOL

Pre-1900

On a sharp turn near a large pine tree, on the road to Dandy, near the present fence of the American Oil Company, stood a school in 1882, known as the Corner Pine School. This school preceeded the Goodwin Neck School, which was built in 1899, and was one of the first public schools in York County, in that, the Virginia Public School System came into being in 1870.

The school was built about 1875 in the area of the present day Amoco Refinery. It had no furnishings as the desks were built against the walls with benches as seats. The building was about the size of a living room of today. Plank shutters were on the two sets of windows with entry at one end through a center door. The school was set off the ground with a log as the single step into the building. A large pine tree denoted the location and name.

Students attended this small one room frame public school for only 5 months of the year, from 9 to 4 each day, and stayed home on bad weather days, since many students would arrive wet from heavy rains and catch a cold by sitting in wet clothing. The usual frills were absent from the Corner Pine School such as a pencil sharpener, running water, central heat and the like. In fact, time was marked in the floor boards. As the sun came to a certain notch in the floor it was time for the noon day lunch and recess activity, and many eyes watched as the sun approached the end of school notch.

A few children in the community attended a private school for one or two months usually taught by a traveling or hired tutor which met in the home of a family involved.

Though the building is long gone, the memory of the Corner Pine School has not been erased, and you can still share the experiences of the school with a living pupil.<sup>3</sup>

## GRAFTON SCHOOL

Pre-1900

The school was built about 1890 across the street from the present day Christian Church on Brick Church Road. The desks were built against the wall with a door at one end and on one side. The building was large enough to have a center chimney and could be made into two rooms with a portable partition. Windows were only on two sides of the classroom. Children as young as 6 years old had to walk the distance, from as far away as Wormley Creek, to get to school.

The school was relocated into a rented home in the Hornsbyville community for a year. Students enjoyed the open fireplace as they ate from their lunch buckets. Another move found the school in the Hornsbyville Baptist Mission building for two years where students sat in the church pews and did writing work with a slate pencil and a piece of slate. Water from the spring and a pile of firewood chopped by the older boys provided the necessities of the school. Books were purchased from the center of the community--the local store.

Students learned the fine use of shaft pen and point and ink. It was an accomplished skill to use the instrument without spattering the ink. Many will recall in later years that fountain pen and ink were standard items from the fourth grade on until the ball-point pen came on the scene in the 1950 period.

A very interesting treatment for misbehavior or disrespect was to have the student suck on the Sugar Rag. Contained in the bag was fat meat, sugar and soap. It was almost certain to make the student vomit. It, however, was not well-received by the community.

Students who quit school had to go to work--no loafers were found anywhere in the community.<sup>4</sup>

## POOR HOUSE LANE OR FARM ROAD SCHOOL

Pre-1900

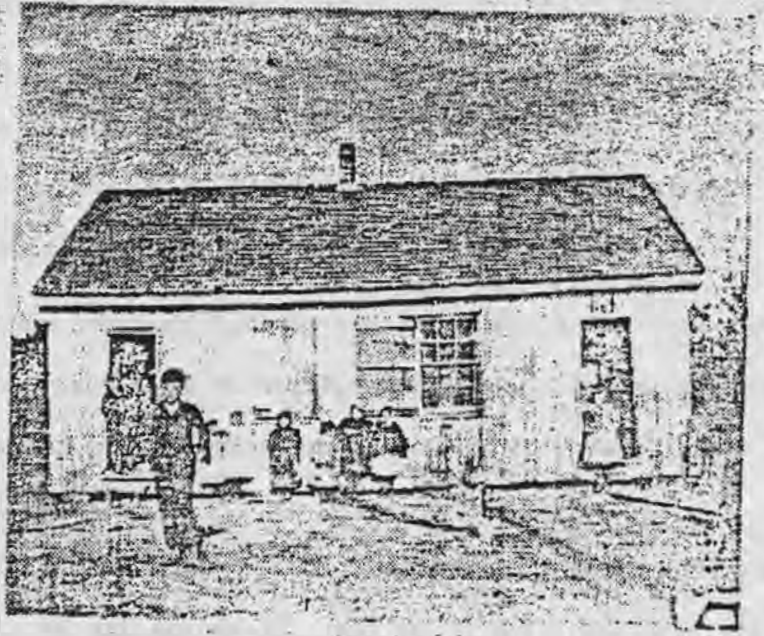
The school was built about 1890 in the vicinity of present day Beechwood Drive and Lakeside Drive or near St. Luke's Methodist Church. The structure had a center chimney, built in desks and plank shutters on the windows which were locked with an iron bar and pin.<sup>5</sup>

The buildings of the poor house farm were standing and visible from the highway until a few years ago when they were torn down.



## SEAFORD

The earliest two schools in Seaford, one being a log cabin and the other being a two room building, were located on the site of the present Zion United Methodist Church.



The Seaford schools were perhaps the oldest schools in the county since the community has been a center of population for a long time and had its own steamboat dock which served as a supply center for many other parts of the county.

## SMITHVILLE SCHOOLS

Pre-1900

Before 1900 this school, named for the Smith family, was located on the curve of the Poquoson Road behind the frame buildings that used to be the Bethel Baptist Church. The actual school site was near the present road to the T. D. Taylor home and the old cemetery. The school preceeded the frame buildings that were the church.

The second location for the school to serve the area was located on the right side of the Poquoson Road between the Moore family home and the Bethel Baptist Church or just about under the VEPCO power lines.

The building at first had one large room with a front porch and a cloak closet. A smaller second room was added at a later date. The lower grades (1 - 4) had church pews and tables for desks while the older grades had the double desks for the 5 - 7 students. Drinking water was obtained from the inverted water bottle stand located out in the hall. Books were very scarce, in fact so scarce, that finally a whole case of books was sent to the school and they were very eagerly received.

May Day was a big event and it was conducted in the yard of the Tabb family.

Seventh grade students were to be transported to Morrison, but since there was no room, they had to attend classes instead in the Hilton School for the years 1926-27. For several years there was no

transportation available for students, so the county furnished the bus and charged each student \$30 a year to ride the bus. Even though there was a very heavy snow during the winter of 1926, the bus made its trip each school day.

To point out that times have not changed, the story was told about the purchase of a complete set of encyclopedias that had to be sent back after someone read the small print and found the financial aspects to be out of control. How did it happen? How could someone not read the small print? Well, the answer came out that the traveling salesman was nice looking.

The school was closed about the year 1924 whereupon the building was jacked up and rolled up the road and moved to the Darby community whereupon it became the Darby School and stood until the summer of 1978, when it was demolished. 7



# YORKTOWN SCHOOL

Pre 1910

In what is now the parking lot of the county courthouse stood the two room schoolhouse that functioned for the students of Yorktown until the year 1922 when the red brick building on Ballard Street opened.

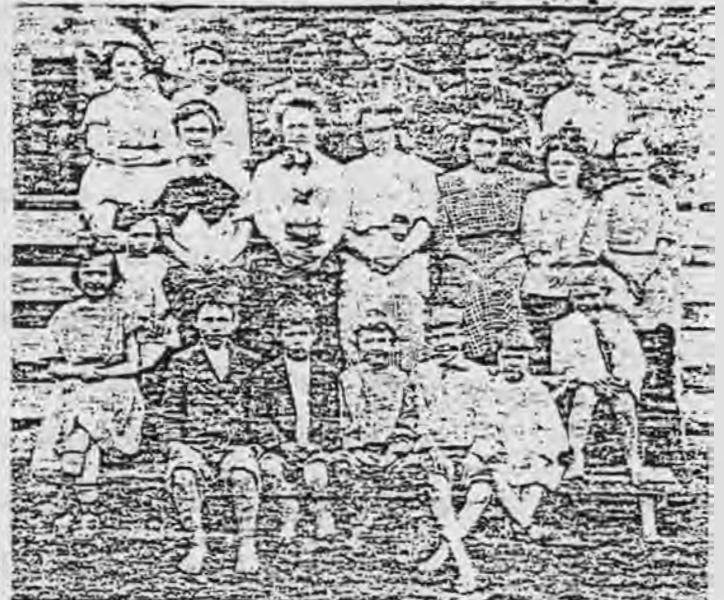
The two room frame building had no electricity and received its bucket of water from the well of the Rogers home, now known as the "Fine Arts Center on the Hill". The bucket of water sat on a table in a hall between the two classrooms of the building. One room accommodated grades 1-6 while the other grades 7-10.

Historic Old Yorktown School Building



The old York school house as it looks today on Ballard Street. Built around 1890 as a one room school the second room was added between 1908-1915. It has had many and various uses since the school was vacated around 1925.

vonDeusen



YORKTOWN SCHOOL PUPILS OF 1911 — OLD BUILDING STILL IN USE

Pupils who attended the Yorktown school in 1911, or thereabouts, are shown lined up on the stile-steps over the fence to have their picture taken. Most of the school buildings now in use in the four upper districts of York County, are older than the structure in which these children learned their three-R's - reading, writing and 'rithmetic. The one room building in which Mrs. Shumate held her classes now houses the York County school board office, and a later addition provides space for the County Health Department. The fence with the stile, separated the schoolyard from the court green, where two unidentified men talk over county affairs in the backdoor of the old courthouse. At the left a high white board fence protected the school children from a close-up view of the old jail. Pictured here are, back row left to right, Alice Cook Satterfield; Sydney Smith; Arthur Koski; Arthur Chandler; Minson Cook; and Henry Cornick. Middle row, Reba Schmidt Magee; Mary Cook Hubbard; Mrs. Leila Shumate, teacher; Marcia DeNeufville Dadda; Virginia Smith; Katherine Sheild Ballenune and Freida Schmidt Flaberry. Front row; Gussie Owens Gordon; Norris DeNeufville. Samuel DeNeufville, Conway H. Sheild, now Commonwealth attorney for Warwick; R. Nelson Smith, Nelson District Supervisor. The very young gentlemen in the white buster-brown suit, is Julian S. Cornick, Commonwealth attorney for York. Sitting above him is Irving Wainright.

## FORMER STUDENTS RECALL CLASSES IN 1920 SCHOOL

YORKTOWN - Queries about Yorktown School - 1920 vintage - elicit a number of reminiscences from former students and resident Yorktowners.

Location of the two-classroom frame building was variously described as being "in between the jail and Red Cross building" and "about where the parking lot of the courthouse" is today.

Mrs. Adde Carter Brown Ballentine and Miss Dorothy Truitt composed the entire teaching staff for this early school. Miss Truitt supervised instruction of pupils in grades one through six in one room of the school, while Mrs. Ballentine was teacher for the higher grades of seven through ten in the school's other room. Students attending the woodstove-heated school went to Williamsburg or elsewhere to complete the remaining year of secondary subjects. Mrs. W. L. Scott, present Yorktown resident and former student at the school, has one vivid remembrance of her school days. After completion she went with her mother to the Williamsburg school where she was to be enrolled, she said. Her mother advised school officials that she had had no laboratory training accompaniment to the science course she had taken at Yorktown School. Because of this, Mrs. Scott said, "I received only half a credit for the course." When some of her classmates matriculated at the same school, their mothers neglected to inform school authorities of the lab lack, she advised, and those students received a full credit for the identical course.

Mrs. Minnie Harris Hogge recalls that most of the students were from Yorktown proper, but some were driven in from a distance of eight

to ten miles.

The building later was used for a school board office, and yet later was torn down. It had been replaced - as a school - in 1928, by the new four room Yorktown Elementary School on Ballard Street, which was opened under the principalship of Judge Conway H. Sheild. His duties later were assumed for many years by Mrs. Selma F. Lawson.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Interview - Mrs. Lincoln Orange
2. Interview - Mr. E. S. Bingley
3. Interview - Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger
4. Interview - Mrs. Alleyne Burcher
5. Interview - Mr. Bob White
6. Interview - Mrs. Virginia Hamm
7. Interview - Mrs. Rogers Smith
8. Interview - Mrs. Margaret Cornick Wornom

## SECOND GENERATION SCHOOLS

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Cary Chapel            | 1900 - 1945 |
| Bethel                 | 1924 - 1933 |
| Darbytown/Tabb         | 1924 - 1953 |
| Fish Neck (Dare)       | 1924 - 1953 |
| Oak Grove              | 1911 - 1938 |
| Seaford (Lewisville)   | 1908 - 1930 |
| Tampico (Hornsbyville) | 1924 - 1936 |
| YCTS                   | 1914 - 1953 |
| Dare - Grafton         | 1908 - 1948 |
| Goodwin's Neck         | 1924 - 1933 |
| Magruder               | 1920 - 1942 |
| Seaford                | 1920 - 1949 |
| Yorktown               | 1922 - 1967 |

## CARY'S CHAPEL SCHOOLS

1900 - 1945

"I don't exactly remember when I started to go to school but I went to the old Poquoson School when I was about seven years old because the teacher at the school lived near our house and invited me to go to school. It had one room, two windows, one door, a bucket of water and long benches for the students. I don't remember any desks, or any chalk boards. A stove provided the heat and it felt good when your clothes were wet after a two mile walk in the rain, or if you fell off the log into the creek while crossing over. There was no electricity in the building and the teacher told time by opening the only door and checking the angle of the sun. We had a noon-time recess, and left for home when the sun looked about 3 p.m. For most of the pupils it was at least a walk of one mile to the school-house either on the road or through the woods.

It was about a lonely two mile walk to school on the road for us, but was only about a mile through the woods known as Chickenpen Orchard to get to school by the 9 o'clock bell. My brother and I were the only children who lived on the long road. As we got bigger it became safer and shorter to walk through the woods. The woods were near the water and men folks were always working in the woods on their boats and nets since most of them did some fishing. On the path through the woods, there were several small creeks to cross. Once in a while we went to school by rowing the rowboat around the creeks and walking a short distance. Farmers later cut trees that fell across the

creeks that became the bridges for travelers. Once in a while one of us would slip off the log into the soft mud beneath and would have to clean up as best we could. Usually our long stockings and high lace boots would be dry when we left school for home.

When the old schoolhouse was torn down, pupils attended school in the old lodge hall for a few years before the new school behind Cary's Chapel Church was built about 1915.

Children did not have to go to school so the first year of school could have been at age seven or eight or older. When the new building opened, which was a two room school, one teacher was greeted by many older pupils who wanted to come to the new school, but who did not attend school in either of the older two buildings. This created a need for a second teacher who was hired shortly thereafter.

With the crowd of pupils and many of them being older in age, the younger pupils would spend the day in school learning whatever the older children were learning and might get to recite the spelling of a few words from the speller or read a page or two from the reader. Only three books were used; those being a Reader, Speller and an Arithmetic book. Books once purchased were bought for life and a pupil had to complete the book to complete the grade.

Since hardly any chalk or pencils existed most of the instruction was by oral recitation. Students would sit and memorize and wait and wait and sometimes wear a hole through the page where fingers had moved across the page as silent lips had recited the words or passage. Sometimes a piece of old paper was available for some writing but the occasion was rare.

I don't remember any bad children or any times when children were punished.

We stayed home when the weather was bad, but I remember one little boy who almost never missed a day. He wanted to go to school very badly, so when all other children stayed home, the teacher had to dress and be at the school to meet the little boy, listen to him recite or read and send him back home.

School was through early in the spring as most of the children worked in the fields or on the farms when planting time came around.

When the York County Training School opened, the only transportation was provided by a Mr. Russell who had a truck and then an old bus and carried the children to the school and picked them up in the afternoon. Children stood inside the corner store to stay warm while waiting for the bus or the truck.

I used to check the afternoon mail and it was not uncommon for me to walk to the Poquoson Post Office and then to the Tabb Post Office to get our mail.

A big treat about twice a year was to go to Wrenn's Wharf in Poquoson and catch the steamer to Hampton. It was the only way to town. Often the water was very rough and it felt good to get off the boat.

My father was very strict and had a good ability to tell if we were late in getting home. He knew where to find us should we be late in getting home from school. Often, he would be standing in the road waiting for us as we rounded the last turn in the road to home just before darkness settled."<sup>1</sup> ( see appendix - photograph )

## BETHEL SCHOOL

1924 - 1933

Near the stop light corner of Route 134 and Big Bethel Road was located the Bethel School. It was a one room frame structure, which now serves as a private home.

Students came from far and wide to attend this school and those who lived on what now is Langley Air Force Base or in Elizabeth City County, which is now Hampton, could have a long walk depending on how close they lived to one of the few bridges over what now is Big Bethel Reservoir or Whyte Creek.

After the seventh grade in this school, students going into the four years of high school at York County Training School (on Goosely Road), could ride the bus operated by Mr. Russell for 10¢ or take the long walk.

Time for the student was well managed as the school day was from nine to three with an hour spent each way to get home or to school. At home, chores of firewood, water from the well, cooking, sewing, feeding the chickens and animals, taking care of the kerosene lamps and candles, washing and ironing clothes and working in the gardens, left some time for reading and memorization of homework before going to an early bed.

As the radio or the super heterodyne or the crystal set came into being, the family circle spent a few early hours on certain evenings of the week enjoying favorite radio programs.

Early to bed meant early to rise and before school and after breakfast a student might go to the hen house for eggs, feed the cow

and horses or mules, empty the slop bucket, lay in a supply of fire-wood and a bucket of water, pick beans in the garden and fix a lunch, before leaving the house for the walk to school. Along the way, school friends met at different points, so that the student with the longest walk had friends to share the walk to school.<sup>2</sup>

## DARBYTOWN SCHOOL

1924 - 1953

On Darby Road, near Tabb in the vicinity of Furby Road, stood the Darbytown School, until the spring of 1978 when it was demolished.

It was a two-room frame building that was built on the site of an earlier single room structure. The history of the name of Darby was not known, and the name was changed in the 1930 period to Tabb School. Grades 1-7 were housed in the two rooms, where one room had the unusual distinction of having a male teacher. The tune of the hickory stick could be heard as children were spanked for misbehaving, and usually in front of the other students.

Most students walked over the dirt roads of the agriculture-lumbering community to get to school, and after the 7th grade, rode a bus to the York County Training School on Goosley Road for high school classes.<sup>3</sup>



## FISH NECK SCHOOL

1924 - 1953

Fish Neck Elementary School, a one room frame building, located across the road from the present Dare Elementary School and used as a private home, had a wood burning stove located in the center of the room fired by a neighbor with some assistance from the older students. Water by the bucket was brought to the class during the year from the pump stand located outside the building. Restroom facilities were two privies located out from the rear of the building in opposite corners of the property.

Students representing grades one through eight were members of the student body. Grades were maintained by what book you were in for different subjects. The one teacher had different groups of students seated in various cluster groups of desks facing in different directions. There was no electricity in the building and on rainy days it was a little hard to see if you were not close to a window. Recess lasted for an hour and the playground extended into the woods through which many students had walked to get to the school. A lunch of some type was brought from home. Some had to walk several miles to get to school on paths through the woods or on narrow roads. It took more than an hour for some to get to school.

The name of the school was changed from Fish Neck School to Grafton School about 1930.<sup>4</sup> ( see appendix - photograph )

## OAK GROVE SCHOOLS

1911 - 1938

Close to or on the site of the present Bruton High School, stood the two story, white frame school known as Oak Grove. Upstairs, after an addition about 1925, it had two classrooms and a small office, with three classrooms and an auditorium downstairs. A large bell hung in the steeple on the roof and the principal rang it by the rope in the small office upstairs.

Prior to electricity coming into that part of the county, the school had gas lamps on the walls and large pot-belly stoves in various rooms. Both were cared for by the older boy students. A bucket of water was kept on top of the stove to aid in heating the room and in case of need.

School was always open regardless of the weather and all students walked until the 1930 period when bus service became available for some communities. In the interest of walking, try the distance from Barlow Corner, Ewell's Station, Magruder, Cooktown Road, or Carter's Neck, another name for Mt. Pilgrim, to the present Bruton High School. A wooden bridge came across Waller Mill pond and provided a much shorter route for those who lived on the other side.

In the morning, all students gathered outside for the pledge of allegiance to the flag with Bible reading and singing completing the devotion period in the various classrooms.

The monthly meeting of the League or the PTA was well attended and usually the students presented a program of recitation and group dances. The one hour noon recess for lunch and play was very popular as it seemed to provide so much time to play and socialize. With an outdoor pump available for a drink of water, students learned to fold and keep handy their paper cup when needed. Vocational and home economic instruction was provided weekly for the older boys and girls by a floating teacher.

In the 1930 period two big events stood out in the life of the student. One was the 6 a.m. departure on the bus for Washington, D. C. The bus had a wooden bench down each side with a back to back bench down the middle with the entry to the bus in the center rear. After a day of touring, the return home that night climaxed a big day.

The second big event was the annual May Day. Usually this was combined with another school. There were all kinds of races, dances and refreshments. Several visiting bands came from other schools and military stations. It was a very big day for the community.

Most of the parents worked at the College of William and Mary until the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg began in 1934 and then over a period of time uniformed employees were needed to portray the Williamsburg story.

About 1938, the Oak Grove School was struck by lightning and destroyed. The school then merged with the new Bruton Heights School replacing the James City County Training School, which was located on the vacant corner near the restored gaol in Williamsburg. 5

## SEAFORD SCHOOLS

1908-1930

In the vicinity of Lewis Drive (Lewisville) stood a church in the year 1908, which served as the elementary school for some years. About 1914 Professor Brown opened a four room school on the property now used by the Naval Weapons Station in Lackey.

Students who had completed the 6th grade in the Seaford School had to travel to the Lackey School to attend the higher grades. No transportation was available. One student rode in the horse and buggy with the father to Lackey each Monday and spent the week by renting a room and taking board for \$1.25 a week. The father returned on Friday for the return trip home.

Over the years, the first school, meeting in the church, closed and the most recent school building used is now a private home in the Lewis Drive community.

Farming and seafood provided the employment of many in Seaford and a number of persons traded as hucksters. An interesting feature for the home was the weekly block of 200 pounds of ice which was brought to the community by the steamboat. Loaded onto the wagon, it was deposited in a saw dust filled box for transport to the home and provided the necessary refrigeration for the week.<sup>6</sup> ( see appendix - photo )

## TAMPICO SCHOOL

1924-1936

On a site near the Grafton Baptist Church on Hornsbyville Road stood the one room school with the unusual name of Tampico. We are told that someone who visited or lived in the area from Florida provided the name.

The white frame single room building had two windows, a single door in the front center and was similar in appearance to the Fish Neck School. Water, by the bucket, was obtained from the J. H. Randall home down the road. Transportation was provided by two strong legs, a dirt road or a long path through the woods. The school term for many was only about five months in length as many children worked on the farm, in the sawmill, or at the waterfront. A few books provided the learning and students spent long hours in memorizing lessons for reciting before all students in the one room school.

An earlier school to serve the area was built by patrons and was located on Wolf Trap Road. The name Tampico was changed in the early 1930's to Hornsbyville School; a name used until its closing in 1936.<sup>7</sup>

## HISTORY OF THE YORK COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL

(James Weldon Johnson School Yearbook)

1955

In 1914 under the leadership of the late, Mrs. Mary S. Washington, who at that time was Jeanes Supervisor of the (York) county, a movement was begun to build a schoolhouse. Dr. Jackson Davis, who was the State Supervisor of Negro Education, became interested and sought some one to carry out the proposed movement.

He recommended Charles E. Brown, who at the time, was principal of the Graded School at Charlotte Court House, Virginia. Mr. Brown came to York County in October 1914, and soon a four room frame building was constructed and ready for use in 1915. Much of the labor used in the construction of the building was donated by the Colored parents.

The old abandoned store was converted into a domestic science room for girls and five teachers were employed. The patrons purchased an adjacent lodge hall, and converted it into a manual art shop for boys.

In 1918 the U. S. Government established the Naval Mine Depot in York County, and the school property was within the 12,000 acre site, and rebuild their school. In the meantime the Shiloh Baptist Church permitted classes to be taught in the church until a school building could be constructed.

The patrons purchased  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land, and with the \$6,000

received from the Government for the original school property, \$1,600 from the Rosenwald Fund, and \$4,300 secured through personal contributions, entertainments, and solicitations a six room Rosenwald type of building was erected with an auditorium, office, and cloak rooms, and was ready for use in 1921.

Two teachers were added, giving a faculty of seven instructors. Two years of high school work were provided. An abandoned one room school house was torn down, removed to the school site and reconstructed to serve as a boys work shop, and the former domestic science course was developed into a Home Economics course, and the manual arts course became the Vocational Agriculture course. Two more instructors were added, giving a faculty of nine teachers and four years of high school work.

With \$2,000 provided by the State, \$2,000 by the County School Board, and \$2,000 by the patrons, a modern Home Economics Cottage was constructed, and under similar arrangements a Vocational Agriculture shop was constructed. Then the reconstructed "old one room school building" was converted into a science laboratory.

With a faculty of nine well trained teachers, and 320 pupils, the York County Training School was well established, and though it had not met the requirements of the State for accreditation its graduates were accepted by such schools as Hampton, Virginia State, Morgan, and Union.

During the period from 1914 to 1933, Mr. Brown remained as the principal of the school and the guiding force in the school's advancement. During this same period the members of the faculty represented

such schools as University of Pennsylvania, Howard, Virginia Union, Hampton, Virginia State, Wilberforce, and St. Paul.

Some of the contributing factors which did much to enhance the progress of the school were, first of all the interest and enthusiasm of the patrons; the interest, influence, and encouragement provided by the presence on various occasions of such noted persons as the late Dr. Booker T. Washington, Dr. Hollis B. Frissell, Dr. John M. Gandy, Dr. James H. Dillard, Dr. Jackson Davis, Dr. R. C. Stearn, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and many others who in several instances visited the school and spoke to the patrons in public meetings.

Secondly, there was an awaking interest in the need for improvement in Negro Education, which was spearheaded by such organizations as the Rosenwald Fund - Jeanes Fund - General Education Board - Slater Fund - and several Acts of Congress which made available finance to aid education in the South. A third factor was the fact that in World War I we saw how deficient our school systems were.

In 1915 our school term was lengthened to eight months, the patrons donated one half the amount of the salary for the four teachers. The enrollment that year was 208 representing eight grades. School work that year showed marked progress. Two years of high school work was now added and one could see rapid improvement and progress through the types of programs which was given at church and schools.

At the close of the term 1918-1919 Samuel Jefferson graduated with honors.

Our graduates and colleges attended were Miss Cora Hundley and Miss Freda Randall, Virginia State College, and Miss Harris, Virginia

Union University. Many have graduated since these, under, Mr. Hollis and Mr. Cornick. Since 1941 to 1955, we kept up the good works with our principal Mr. R. L. Rice. We kept up the good work with eleven class rooms, agriculture shop, Home Economics, and Cafeteria.

On May 31, 1954, what we considered at first a great catastrophe befell us. Our building burned to the ground putting 376 pupils out of school. The Shiloh Baptist Church opened its doors to us as they had done in 1914, when the government took over the school property.

We are still very grateful to them.

Now we are in one of the finest buildings found anywhere in the state of Virginia.

The James Weldon Johnson School was built by the Motley Construction Company of Farmville, Virginia. Work was started on this building June 14, 1953.

The cost was \$731,966. There are twenty-six classrooms, gymnasium, auditorium and other rooms. The enrollment is 650 high and elementary pupils and students. There are twenty-six instructors.

We have a twelve year curriculum, including; business, vocational agriculture, shop, Home Economics, and academic subjects.<sup>8</sup>  
( see appendices - photographs and newspaper articles )



## DARE-GRAFTON SCHOOL

1908 - 1948

On Dare Road near the present Burcher Road stood the four room, two story frame Dare-Grafton School. The location was somewhat a compromise between the two sections of the county.

Heated by a wood burning stove in each room and watered by a hand pump located inside the building in the back hall, students were welcomed to the building each day by the clanging of a large hand bell. It was quite important to be the student who got to ring the bell.

Four teachers, with one teacher acting as the principal, provided the instruction for students in grades one through the second year of high school. The final two years of high school were not available in York County and those students had to go to Morrison, (Warwick High School), or Poquoson High School to graduate. The grade levels taught in the school varied over the years, depending upon students and funding.

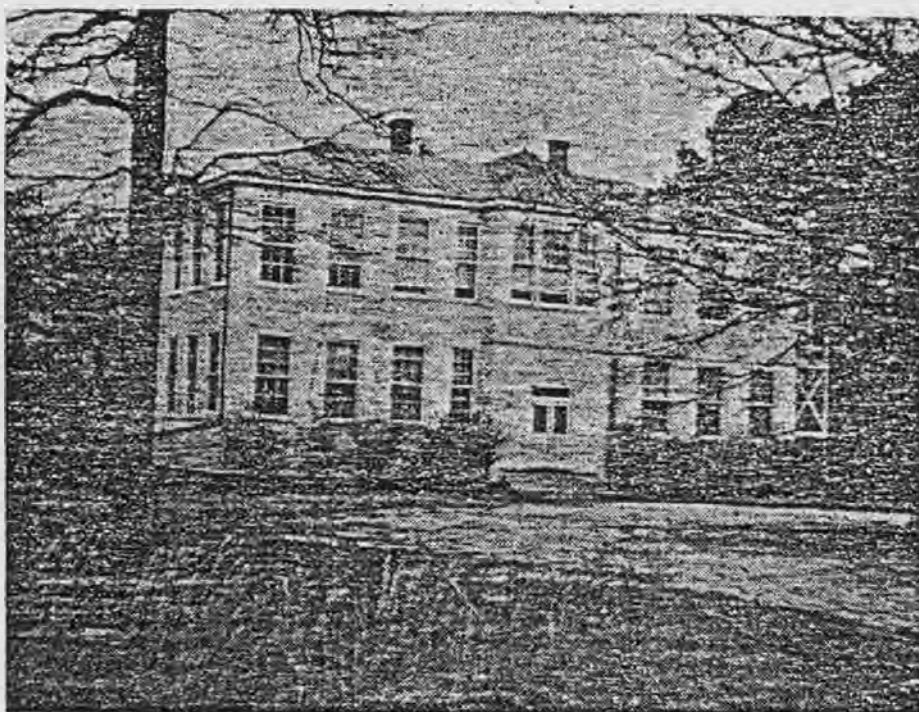
Some students walked to the school from the vicinity of Piney Point, while others crossed the creek by boat at the railway in Seaford and walked the remaining distance. A four mile walk to school was nothing, after doing a load of chores at home before leaving for school.

Students were not allowed in the building before 8:30, but on a cold snowy morning an early arriving student was let in by the janitor to get warm by the stove. Somehow the student put the broom on or near the stove, where it caught fire and the janitor suffered a burn on the face. Orders had been disobeyed, medication was administered, a student

was sent home in the cold snow and a father was talked with to resolve the situation.

Eating peanuts seemed to cause a student to suffer a jumping seizure whereupon the teacher had to hug the student to settle the situation. It was funny and not so funny.

Doors were closed in 1948.<sup>9</sup>



## GOODWIN'S NECK SCHOOL

1924 - 1933

During the very early twenties, seven classes were taught by one teacher in the one room school in Dandy (Goodwin's Neck). By the late twenties, the sixth and seventh grades were bussed on the dirt road the long distance to Seaford School on Back Creek Road.

There were no water facilities on the school grounds. In order to obtain water for the galvanized bucket and common water dipper, which rested on the end of a church pew (the building was used for Sunday School on Sundays and preaching occasionally), pupils would have to walk approximately  $1/8$  of a mile to the nearest neighbor's home. The time this chore took would vary according to which pair of students was sent, as well as to the beauty of the weather outside.

Pupils who were fortunate enough to have a few pennies with them were often allowed to walk to a small grocery store, which was perhaps  $1/3$  of a mile away, to purchase candy or cookies, during "recess", an indefinite period of time. Since many grades were taught in one room, upper classmates served as teachers aides for the very young pupils. There were no library books or any craft materials. During cold weather, the older boys often chopped wood for the large stove centered in the room. An elongated pipe, leading from the outside chimney, was held in place by wires extending from the ceiling. Time was kept by a wind-up clock as we studied in our arithmetic, reading, writing and spelling books. Each Friday, after lunch, the Junior League, an organization of students, gathered to conduct a meeting and make plans for activities.<sup>10</sup>

## MAGRUDER SCHOOLS

1920 - 1951

Before the U. S. Government established Camp Perry, the Magruder School, which was a two story, six classroom white frame building, with a bell tower stood on a site about one mile inside the present main gate.

The area was known as Bigler's Mill and many people resided in the vicinity due to the large seafood business maintained by Maynard's Oyster House with names like Hansford, Gage, Hovey and Newman associated with the business.

Students came from far away to attend the school walking great distances. A few had the privilege of riding in the Model T bus or the covered wagon operated by O. J. Waas. Instruction was offered for all grades 1-11 with usually about five in the graduating class. The twelfth grade did not come into being until 1948 in York County.

In 1942, the school was closed as Camp Perry became a large military base. A temporary building was used until the present Magruder School was occupied in 1951. The location of the temporary building was in a barracks building on Cheatam Annex property just off Penniman Road next to the New Quarter Baptist Church.<sup>11</sup>

( see appendix --photographs )

## SEAFORD SCHOOLS

1920 - 1949

For the 1920-1949 period, there stood a two story, four room white frame school house on the south side of Back Creek Road between the present Parker and Whites Lanes known as Seaford Elementary School.

Nine grades of school were taught in the four rooms with groupings of students in grades 1-4 in one room, 5-7 in another and grades 8-9 in another. The teacher found time to work with a group at a time while the other groups did their desk work or enjoyed the out of doors recess.

The building was heated with a wood stove, cooled by opening windows, supplied with water from the outside well which was later moved into the vestibule when it was added to the front of the building. The call of nature was handled in either the his or her privy located on the edge of the school property.

School lunch was what you brought to eat either in the bag or bucket or in your pocket.

The school had no telephone or clinic, so when a student became sick at school, it could be a long walk home, alone. Childhood diseases automatically put a quarantine sign on the front door of the house and the house was off limits for visitors for the usual 14 days.

There was no electricity in the school and the light through the large windows was very meager on dark, rainy days. For that reason the rainy day recess, or early dismissal, since you missed your recess, was a plan of action until 1948. Even though you were out of school

early, you still had to walk home. Many a drenched student finally got home, peeled off wet everything and went straight to bed to ward off sickness.

With no transportation, students had to walk long distances to get to school. Some came from Waterview, Wormley Creek, Hornsybille, Harris Grove, Yorktown and Poltown or Polish Town, which is another story involving a cement plant for York County and the sinking of the Titanic. Even the youngest student was on his own to get to school by walking the long dirt road or path through the woods, over the creek on the log and in sunshine or storm. Students left home by eight in the morning and returned in the evening by five.

Students performed many chores as regular daily duties and on occasion certain chores earned extra rewards as one young lady had to milk the cow every morning for two years before going to school to earn enough money to buy a wrist watch.

High school was a new experience, as there was no high school for white students in York County from about 1930 until York High opened in 1954. Instead students could attend Mathew Whaley in Williamsburg, Morrison later to be known as Warwick, in Newport News or Poquoson. From Seaford, students usually attended Morrison riding over bumpy roads on a school bus with a wooden bench on either side and another down the center of the bus. It left a pick-up point at 7:30 a.m. and returned at 5:00 p.m. A certain former student once finished an exam at Morrison and with several others started to walk home to Seaford. The school bus finally came along and caught up with them at Tabb. Oh, my aching feet.<sup>12</sup> ( see appendix - photograph )

## YORKTOWN SCHOOL

The new school in Yorktown in 1922 was the red brick building on Ballard Street. Built with the quaint dormer windows, it added to the surroundings. The playground space was of particular note as the students thoroughly enjoyed running over the hill and dale effect of the restored fortifications. The war years saw the addition of the cinderblock wing while the postwar years saw the addition of the metal building. Even when the new generation of school buildings were being built in the 1950-1960 period, the little old red brick schoolhouse retained its charm and tried to keep up until it became too small to handle its student population.

The hotel that stood on the site of the Yorktown Bank provided living/boarding arrangements for the teacher.

It was no fun to be kept in or to stay after school and walk home alone for being naughty or misbehaving in school. The noon recess was the daily big event since a student could go home for lunch or eat the lunch brought from home. On one such occasion, the battleships of the fleet were entering the river. The children got so engrossed in the scene, that only one of them remembered to go back to school until late in the afternoon. From a reliable source, it is reported that sailors walked to shore from ships locked in the ice in the York River during the freezing winter of 1918.

The big event was the annual school play performed before an audience in the courtroom of the old courthouse that burned some years ago.

The daily entertainment or learning experience was the 8:00 a.m. arrival of the steamboat at the dock in Yorktown. Many things were loaded and unloaded that kept the agriculture and seafood industry of the community thriving. With the sound of the great ship's whistle, it was time to leave the Yorktown wharf and continue to West Point or Baltimore and let school get back to normal.

A new school site was selected on Seige Lane and the little old red brick building became an office building in 1967 as the replacement school opened.<sup>13</sup> ( see appendices - photographs and articles)

## FOOTNOTES

1. Interview - Mrs. Jennie Sue Hopson
2. Interview - Mrs. Martha Howard
3. Interview - Mrs. Mary Byrd and Mr. Robert Sedgwick
4. Interview - Mr. Robert Sedgwick
5. Interview - Mr. Lincoln Orange and Mr. Ezekiel Lee and Mrs. Sara Randall
6. Interview - Mrs. Laura Barbour
7. Interview - Mrs. Freda Randall Edney and Mrs. Venice Camm
8. Interview - Mrs. Carolyn Hammond and Mr. J. A. Allen and Mrs. Musetta White
9. Interview - Mrs. Alleyne Burcher
10. Interview - Mrs. Dexter Haven
11. Interview - Mr. E. S. Bingley
12. Interview - Mrs. Virginia Hamm and Mrs. Thelma Hansford and Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger
13. Interview - Mrs. Margaret Cornick Wormom and Mrs. Thelma Lawson

### THIRD GENERATION SCHOOLS

|                                              |      |
|----------------------------------------------|------|
| James Weldon Johnson (Yorktown Intermediate) | 1954 |
| Frederick Douglas (Magruder Annex)           | 1952 |
| Magruder Elementary (additions)              | 1952 |
| Grafton Bethel (additions)                   | 1952 |
| York High (additions)                        | 1954 |
| Seaford Elementary (additions)               | 1962 |
| Bethel Manor Elementary (transfer from AF)   | 1963 |
| Dare Elementary (additions)                  | 1965 |
| Queen's Lake Intermediate                    | 1966 |
| Tabb Intermediate                            | 1967 |
| Yorktown Elementary (additions)              | 1967 |
| Waller Mill Elementary (additions)           | 1969 |
| Tabb High                                    | 1972 |
| Tabb Elementary                              | 1976 |
| Bruton High                                  | 1976 |
| Mt. Vernon Elementary                        | 1982 |

### THIRD GENERATION SCHOOLS

#### JAMES WELDON JOHNSON/YORKTOWN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Located on Route 17 at the corner of Goosley Road about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the Coleman Bridge, which provides access across the York River to Gloucester County. The school was opened for students in 1954 as a complete school with grades 1-12 for black students of the county replacing the York County Training School which was located on Goosley Road near the present Cook Road or old Route 17. The Training School burned in 1953 just a short time before the opening of the new school.

In the late 1960's as the county schools were integrated the school was renamed the Yorktown Intermediate School and has housed grades 7-8 until the present time.

#### FREDERICK DOUGLAS/MAGRUDER ANNEX SCHOOL

Located near Route 60 on Penninam Road. The school was opened in 1954 as an elementary school for black students in grades 1-6.

In the integration move of the late 1960's the school was renamed the Magruder Annex and functioned as an overflow school, an experimental school and now not as a public school but as a child-care/parent center for the county.

#### MAGRUDER SCHOOL

Located at the corner of Route 60 and Penniman Road was opened in 1952 as an elementary school for white students in grades 1-6.

Additions to each hall were added shortly after opening to increase the capacity to 24 rooms for 720 students. Currently the school provides service for students in grades 1-4.

#### GRAFTON BETHEL SCHOOL

Located at the corner of Lakeside Drive and School Lane was opened in 1952 as an elementary school for white students in grades 1-6.

Additions to each hall were added shortly after opening to increase the capacity to 24 rooms for 720 students. Currently the school provides service for students in grades K-6.

#### YORK HIGH SCHOOL

Located on Route 17 about 3 miles from Yorktown was opened in 1954 and after a 24 year absence, white students would now be able to graduate from a county high school.

Several additions were added in quick succession as the building would, in a few years, have to provide space for more than a 1,000 students in grades 6-12. After several adjustments, as new schools opened, the present student body of grades 9-12 resulted and the school served the entire county until Tabb and Bruton High Schools opened.

#### SEAFORD SCHOOL

Located on Seaford Road about 3 miles east of Route 17 the school, the first air-conditioned plant, was opened in 1962 for white students in grades 1-6.

Additions to each hall several years later resulted in a 24 room school. Currently the school houses grades K-6.

#### BETHEL MANOR SCHOOL

Located in the U.S. Air Force housing area of Bethel Manor on Route 134 near the Hampton City boundary, the school became a part of the York County system in 1963.

The main building was originally a part of the early radio system of the base being renovated and becoming an elementary school when the off base housing community came into being. Through 1962 it was operated as a U.S. Air Force school with a principal-superintendent for the single unit.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 1-6.

#### DARE SCHOOL

Located on Dare Road about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile east of Route 17 and across the road from Fish Neck School, the school was opened in 1965 as a middle school for grades 6 and 7. After several years space was available and the school became an elementary school for grades 1-6.

Additions to each hall several years later resulted in a 24 room school. Currently the school houses grades K-6.

#### QUEEN'S LAKE SCHOOL

Located on Queen's Lake Drive about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of the Colonial Parkway was opened in 1966 as an intermediate school.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 7-8.

#### TABB INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Located on Poquoson Road about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Route 17 was opened in 1967 as an intermediate school.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 7-8.

#### YORKTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Located on Seige Lane just to the west of Route 17 in front of York High School was opened in 1967 as an elementary school to replace the school located in Yorktown Village now used as the county administrative building.

An addition to the rear of the building was added shortly after opening to increase the capacity to 28 rooms. Currently the school provides service for students in grades K-6.

#### WALLER MILL SCHOOL

Located on Waller Mill Road about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of By-Pass Road was opened in 1969 as an elementary school.

Additions to each hall several years later resulted in a 24 room school. Currently the school houses kindergarten and grades 5 and 6.

#### TABB HIGH SCHOOL

Located at the corner of Big Bethel and Poquoson Roads was opened in 1972 as a high school for the lower end of York County exclusive of the town of Poquoson.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 9-12.

#### TABB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Located on Big Bethel Road about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of Route 134 was opened in 1976 as an elementary school.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 1-6.

#### BRUTON HIGH SCHOOL

Located on the access road parallel to Interstate 64 across from the entrance to Camp Perry and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Route 143 was opened in 1976 as a high school for students in the upper end of the county. Until the school opened the students were transported to York High School which was more than a 30 minute ride one way each day to school.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 9-12.

## MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL

Located on Mount Vernon Drive just off Poquoson Road and across from Tabb Intermediate School was opened in 1982 as an elementary school. Space is available and plans are complete to add another wing to the plant if needed.

Currently the school provides service for students in grades 1-6.

## More FOOTPRINTS ?

At this point in time, I am aware of possible other schools that existed in various parts of the county and am aware of other people whose memories are not contained in this publication, but as I said in the FOREWARD, this is only the beginning of the story of FOOTPRINTS...

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June 1983

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### E. Interviews

Mrs. Laura Barbour of Seaford

Mr. E. S. Bingley of Williamsburg

Mrs. Alleyne Gwynn Burcher of Grafton

Mrs. Mary Byrd of Darby Road

Mrs. Vernice Camm of Dare

Mrs. Freda Randall Edney of Hornsbyville

Mrs. Virginia Hamm of Seaford  
Mrs. Carolyn Hammond of Lackey  
Mrs. Thelma Hansford of Seaford  
Mrs. Dexter Haven of Yorktown  
Mrs. Jennie Sue Hopson of Calthrope's Neck  
Mrs. Martha Howard of Bethel Road  
Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger of Seaford  
Mrs. Thelma Lawson of Yorktown  
Mr. Ezekiel Lee of Williamsburg  
Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Orange of Penniman Road  
Mrs. Sara Randall of Penniman Road  
Mr. Robert Sedgwick of Dare  
Mrs. Margaret Cornick Wormon of Yorktown  
Mr. Glenn Page, Treasurer, York County, Virginia  
Mr. E. L. Morris, Sr. of Portsmouth